

The One Year Anniversary of the Tribal Law and Order Act

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Last week, the White House celebrated the Tribal Law and Order Act's one year anniversary. This law is significantly increasing federal and tribal information sharing and "the federal government's ability to work with Indian tribes in the investigation and prosecution of crime impacting tribal communities." [1] Further, it reduced confusion about authorities and prosecution.

This law is critical for Indian Country. As a law enforcement officer in Indian Country, we faced what I called the jurisdictional puzzle "depending upon whether the victim was native or non-native, the offender was native or non-native, and where the crime happened, there were some crimes that we couldn't touch because of jurisdiction.

To be clear, this is different on different reservations "some tribes have different jurisdictional agreements, or MOUs, with local law enforcement. However, on my reservation, when we encountered a non-native responsible for drunk driving, for example, we had to wait for state or local law enforcement entities to arrive. If they couldn't come right away, we were forced to release the offender.

We were all greatly moved by Lisa Iyotte's story, [which she shared at last year's signing of the Act](#) [1]. As she stated at the signing, her tragedy could have been prevented by the Act, which fixes many of the problems in tribal jurisdiction over non-native against native domestic violence.

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1 Read about the White House anniversary celebration: [Celebrating the One Year Anniversary of the Tribal Law and Order Act](#) [7].

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